

INION

FROM THE NEWS EDITORIAL STAFF

Protect the planet, protect yourself

Do you buy into global warming? It's a hotly debated issue.

Are the tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, earth quakes and dramatic changes in weather patterns natural occurrences or acts of an angry God? Or, are they part of global warming?

Whether or not you believe in global warming, there are still benefits in preserving our open spaces, conserving our natural resources, and protecting our environment — our health.

Burning fossil fuels causes pollution, which creates free radicals that damage our cells. Air pollution, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, causes respiratory disease, heart disease, cancer, eye irritation, nausea, headaches, impaired fetal development, neurological disorders and lowered IQ. Let's not forget, according to

beauty experts, what free radicals do to our beautiful skin — premature aging. Air pollution forms smog, creates acid rain, and damages plant and animal eco systems.

Trees, as we know, clean these pollutants from the air, protecting us from these diseases and disorders. But, we can't stop developing. We have to have more roads, more shopping centers, bigger homes; we have to create a movement to protect a tree or a parcel of open land.

Mining and drilling for coal and oil have ill effects on those who do the mining and drilling, not to mention what they do to the environment and people who live in areas that allow near the mines and oil fields. Recent disasters have reminded us that mining and drilling for fossil fuels takes life

(human, aquatic and animal), poisons water and land, and spoils pristine beaches and land.

Fossil fuels are finite, and we are running out. To get more, we are tearing down mountain ranges to get at coal and wanting to waste protected lands to get oil.

We're part of nature. Destroying it destroys us.

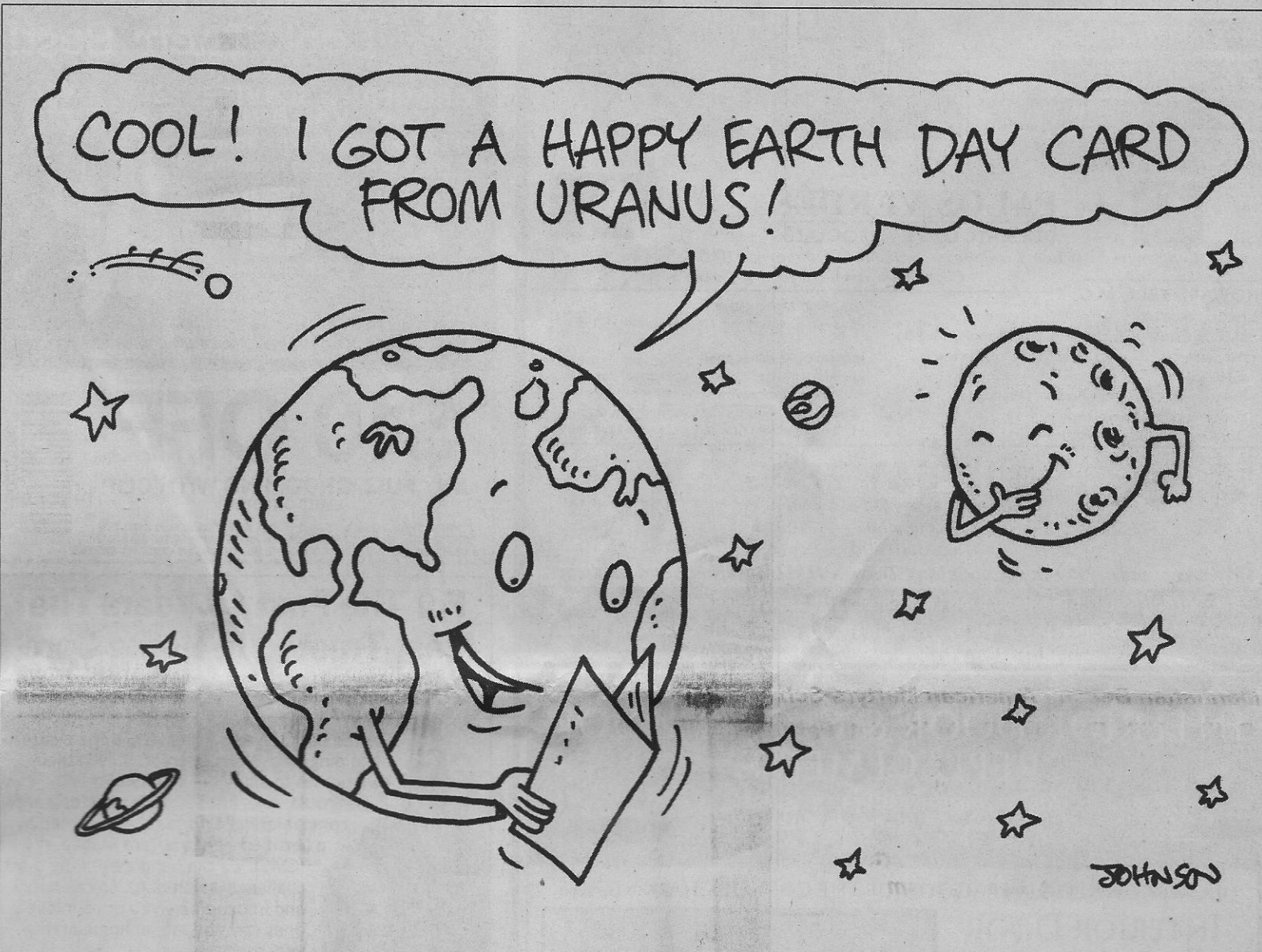
Have you ever been stressed and took a walk on the beach or a hike in the preserve? How did you feel afterward? Refreshed? There's a reason people want to escape concrete cubicles and head out on a surf board, or in kayak or into the woods.

Living a green lifestyle means reducing our consumption, recycling and reusing items, all in an effort to protect virgin products made from fossil fuels

and nature. It's about purchasing organic products and foods, reducing cancer-causing pesticide-laden products sold. It's about composting, removing food and greens from landfills and using the organic material to feed and nurture soil and plants. It's about using alternative, sustainable sources of energy like solar and wind to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels.

The great thing is that you don't have to make drastic lifestyle changes to make a difference. Put your food scraps in a green waste bin rather than a trash bin. Use glass instead of plastic. If you use plastic, wash it and reuse it. Turn lights off. Read a book rather than watch TV. Walk or bicycle short distances rather than getting in your car.

Developing a green lifestyle will save you money, save your health and protect this big, wonderful planet we call home.



Note: The opinions reflected in the Letters to the Editor and in the commentary do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the News.